



News from the Department of Planning and Zoning

Technical Memorandum

Subject: Existing House Location Plats

Date: April 1, 2011

No.: 11-02

Summary: New requirements are being implemented for the use of existing house location plats (plats) for detached single family dwellings when applying for a building permit to build additions and accessory structures.

Effective Date: May 2, 2011

Background: Currently, the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) allows the use of existing plats for detached single family dwellings to accompany a permit application for the construction of additions and accessory structures. The proposed construction is required to be drawn on the plat to scale with the dimension to the lot lines shown to ensure compliance with minimum yard setbacks. In many cases, submitted plats had been used for previous permit applications, and DPZ has had a longstanding policy to permit their re-use provided the plats are accurate, legible and to-scale, and the proposed construction is clearly delineated and discernable for county field staff.

In recent discussions with industry representatives, including licensed land surveyors and engineers, concerns were raised regarding the re-use of plats without consent of the original preparer. This practice could be considered problematic and in violation of state licensing statutes.

In conjunction with the new requirement for setback certifications, DPZ is finding that when a setback certification plat is submitted, there are structures shown therein that were not shown on the plat submitted with the permit application. In other cases, known structures were shown in locations that were not approved during permit application zoning review. These inconsistencies have resulted in failed setback certifications and, in some cases, notices of violation.

Policy: Plats which accompany permit applications for the construction of additions and accessory structures should be prepared and certified by a qualified, licensed professional. However, submission of existing plats will continue to be permitted in accordance with the following requirements.

- If an existing plat is modified in any way for purposes of obtaining a building permit, the applicant shall highlight the proposed modification by enclosing it in a "bubble" or "box." If the person editing the plat is not the original preparer, then he or she shall initial and date the modification and cross-out the name and seal of the original preparer.
- The plat shall contain a statement signed and dated by the owner or authorized agent which attests that it is an accurate representation of the location and height of all existing and proposed structures and their dimension to the respective lot lines.

- Plats shall include the distance from the dwelling, including any extensions from the vertical plane of the structure, to all lot lines. For features which extend into the minimum required yard (setback) pursuant to Paragraph 1A of Section 2-412 of the Zoning Ordinance, such as uncovered stairs, eaves, bay windows and chimneys, the plat shall include the distance of the feature to all lot lines as well as the specific dimension which qualifies the feature for the permitted extension. For example, in the case of an eave, the height above finished grade shall be shown. In the case of a bay window, chimney or uncovered stair, the width shall be shown.
- If during permit application a plat is submitted which has been utilized multiple times or does not accurately reflect existing lot conditions, staff shall require the submission of a new plat certified by a qualified licensed professional which reflects the location and height of all existing and proposed structures and their dimension to the respective lot lines.
- As defined by Section 18-602 of the Zoning Ordinance, new homes on existing foundations which are considered new construction, shall require the submission of a new plat certified by a licensed professional reflecting the new construction.

It has been the practice of DPZ to provide homeowners free copies of their plats contained, when available, in the county property files. Often these same plats are then used in conjunction with building permit applications. DPZ will continue to make these copies available; however, a disclaimer will now be added stating that the plat may not be acceptable for use during the permit application process.

For more information: Questions regarding the use of plats for the zoning review of building permit applications may be directed to the Zoning Permit Review Branch at 703-222-1082, TTY 711. Questions regarding other aspects of this Technical Memorandum may be directed to the Zoning Administration Division at 703-324-1314, TTY 711.

Approved by: Eileen M. McLane
Zoning Administrator